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NEGATIVE BURN

an anthology

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NEGATIVE BURN

VOLUME ONE
NUMBER THREE

an anthology

Joe Pruett and Charles Moore /Editors

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written by James Pruett
illustrated by Avido Khahaifa

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LAZARETTO VI ..... Page 17
written by Brent Trammell
illustrated by Brent Trammell and Bradley Walton

THE GREAT FROG BALL ..... Page 25
written and illustrated by Marc Erickson

THE PANIC ..... Page 28
written by Joe Pruett
illustrated by J. Adam Walters
created by Bob Burden

POPPY ..... Page 30
written and illustrated by Craig Hamilton

Cover Art of BLACK MIST by Andrew Robinson
Back Cover Art of LAZARETTO VI by Brent Trammell

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BLACK MIST *Prelude*

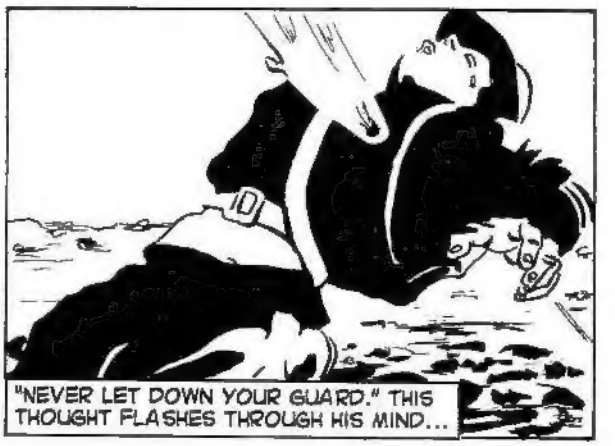
LATE MAY 1918, NEAR CONTIGNY, FRANCE.
"TRANQUILITY ECHOES ACROSS THE WAR-RAVAGED LAND. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE PRESENCE OF GREY-CLAY TRENCHES THERE WOULD BE NO SIGN OF HUMANITY--A DEAD LAND."
"THE RETIREMENT OF THE COMBATANT INTO THE SOIL PRODUCES A LANDSCAPE SUFFUSED WITH AMBIVALENCE. THE EARTH SERVES SIMULTANEOUSLY AS ONE'S HOME AND THE HABITAT OF A HIDDEN, EVER-PRESENT THREAT."
"OCCASIONALLY THAT THREAT SURFACES CAUSING THE STILLNESS TO BE SHATTERED..."
"...AND THE SENSELESS SLAUGHTER OF WAR COMMENCES."

"WAR IS NOTHING IF NOT AN EXPERIENCE OF EXTREME DISCONTINUITY TOUCHING ON EVERY LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS."
"MANY VETERANS SPEAK OF HAVING INHABITED TWO DISTINCT WORLDS...
...OF HAVING SEEMED TWO DISTINCT PERSONS."
"THE PERSONALITY THAT HAS ADAPTED TO THE VICISSITUDES OF WAR SEEMS TO BE IN VAST CONTRAST...
...WITH THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS GROWN UP IN CIVILIAN SOCIETY."
"MEN MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY WOUNDED IN COMBAT NO LONGER BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES...
...OR THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR HUMANITY THROUGH THIS SEEMINGLY NON-ENDING NIGHTMARE."
"BELIEVE ME... I KNOW ABOUT THE LOSS OF HUMANITY."

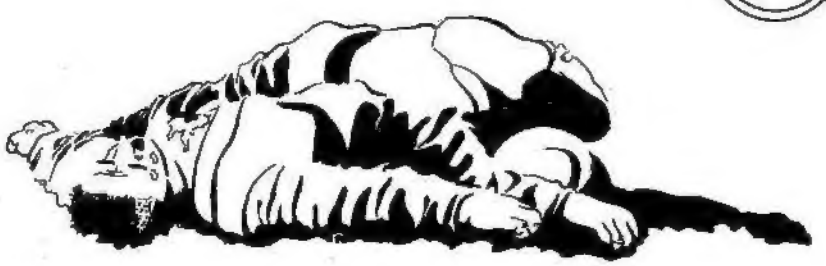
HE KNOWS BEFORE HE TURNS JONATHAN'S LIMP BODY OVER THAT HIS FRIEND IS NO LONGER WITH HIM.

HE KNOWS HE'LL NEVER HEAR HIS LAUGHTER NOR HIS PLAYFUL BOASTS OF SINGLE-HANDEDLY CAUSING THE KAISER TO SURRENDER.

HE KNOWS THAT ALL HE WILL SEE IS THE SOULESS STARE...



...A MOMENT TOO LATE.



(GET IT OFF ME!)
ARGGH!!
MEIN GOTT!

THE CRY OF THE SLAUGHTERED LAMB HAS BEEN HEARD. THE WIND HAS WHISPERED TO ME A NAME... YOUR NAME.
(NO! STAY AWAY FROM ME! GET BACK!)
I AM RETRIBUTION.
ALLOW MY HANDS TO CLEANSE YOUR SINS.

AAARGH!
(MY FACE!)
MAN HAS CHOSEN THE WAY OF THE FLESH. IT HAS BECOME THE SIGNATURE OF HUMANITY.
MY HUMANITY WAS TAKEN FROM ME BY YOUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. WHAT THEY STOLE I NOW DELIVER UNTO YOU.
THE PRICE TO YOU IS YOUR ESSENCE OF BEING... YOUR HUMANITY...YOUR FLESH.
BEING NO LONGER OF THE FLESH, YOU ARE ABLE TO PERCEIVE THE REALITY THAT SURROUNDS US ALL. YOU ARE WITNESS TO THE PERPETUAL ANGUISH OF THE MIST.

THE WORLD WILL LEARN TO RESTRAIN ITS DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES OR DROWN WITHIN THE STYGIAN DEPTHS OF... THE BLACK MIST!
"I DWELL ALONE IN A WORLD OF MOAN. AND MY SOUL IS A STAGNANT TIDE..."
--EDGAR ALLAN POE
WATCH FOR THE ONGOING SERIES...

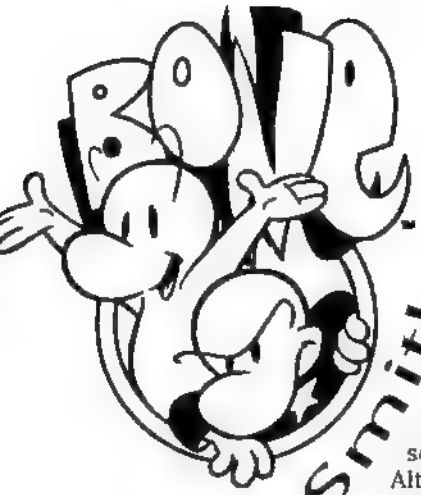
BLACK MIST

COMING SOON

MR. MAMOULIAN
ART AND EXCREMENT

5 BOLLAND 87

THAT **REALLY** IS CRAP
PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT
THE ARTISTIC PROCESS IS LIKE THE HUMAN DIGESTIVE SISTEM
THE ARTIST TAKES IN NOURISHMENT FROM THE WORLD AROUND...
DIGESTS IT... AND EJECTS IT IN THE FORM OF **ART**
WHAT YOU SEE HERE IS THE **WASTE MATTER** OF THE ARTIST
BETTER OUT THAN IN
IT'S A GREAT PRIVILEGE TO SEE SOMETHING SO INTIMATE
I HAVE TO GO TO THE TOILET
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND HOLD OUT YOUR HAND



Sketches

by Jeff Smith

I first became aware of Jeff Smith's creation BONE when I read a preview of the series in the back of CEREBUS sometime last year. Althougth I was instantly intrigued, for some reason I didn't get around to looking for the series. Over the next few months I kept seeing articles that would mention BONE as a "must-have" addition to anyone's collection. Tony Isabella raved about it. Dave Sim raved about it. I finally decided to give it a try.

I couldn't find it.

Sure I could subscribe, but why take the easy way out? Part of the fun of collecting comics is the hunt—the thrill of finding that one comic for which you've searched high and low.

No luck.

About this time the idea of NEGATIVE BURN begin to take form. When I realized it was to be an ongoing series I begin to think of creators I would like to approach about doing short stories for the book. I wanted to publish stories of some series that I thought deserved special attention, but of which the general public wasn't really aware of. Martin Wagner's HEPCATS came to mind (Martin will be doing an original HEPCATS story for NEGATIVE BURN in early 1994), as did BONE. You have to remember that I'd yet to read a full issue of BONE. I had only read the preview in CEREBUS. It left that much effect on me.

So, without really knowing Jeff, I wrote him a letter. I also finally sent a check for a subscription since I wasn't having any luck finding BONE locally (of course the day I sent the letter I went to the local comic shop and bought the reprints of BONE #1-3 that had just come in that very day).

I was hooked!

BONE was everything I expected and more! I thrilled to the adventures of the Bone cousins from Boneville. I fell in love with Thorn. I laughed out loud at the "stupid, stupid rat creatures!" Any amount of praise that Jeff receives is warranted, and, furthermore, isn't enough! BONE is simply a delight. No matter what age you are you'll enjoy it and clamor for more. Guaranteed.

Jeff will be presenting a new BONE short for NEGATIVE BURN when he can find the time between issues, but since I don't want to wait that long to introduce new readers to BONE, I've decided to go ahead and give you a sneak into how Jeff produces BONE. The first two pages that follow show how Jeff lays each page out—focusing more on the dialogue and word placement. Pages three and four show the next step of actually putting the art on paper. The characters become much clearer and the visuals take shape. Finally, pages five and six give you the finished product.

If you haven't read BONE, then pick it up and give it a try. Better yet, subscribe. BONE is a self-published project whose only means of income is you, the fan. If you like it, support it. You won't be disappointed.

Joe Pruett
Co-Editor

HIYA, BONE!
HELLO, TED! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR A WHILE! WHAT'VE YOU BEEN UP TO?
SAME OL' STUFF. HOW 'BOUTS YOU?
OH...
SAME OL' STUFF.
SIGH.
WHY DON'T YA JUST TELL THOEN THAT YA LIKES HER -- INSTEAD OF MOPIN' AROUND OUT HERE IN TH' WOODS!

WHAT'S TH' POINT? SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL... AN' I'M SO FUNNY LOOKIN!

I COULD NEVER DO THAT.

IF YER TOO SHY TO TELL HER, THEN WHY DON'TS YA WRITE ,, TO HER?

YOU MEAN LIKE A LOVE POEM?

SURE! WHY NOT? THA'S JES' TH' THING! LET HER KNOW HOW YA FEELS!

WHAT'S TH' POINT? SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL... AN' I'M SO FUNNY LOOKIN'.

THA'S EXACKLY TH' POINT! YOU WRITES A A REAL ROWSER, AN' SHE GETS TH' ROMANTIC PART WITHOUT YOU STANDIN' THERE TO REMIND HER HOW DOOFY LOOKIN' YOU ARE!

THANKS TED. YOURE A REAL PAL,,

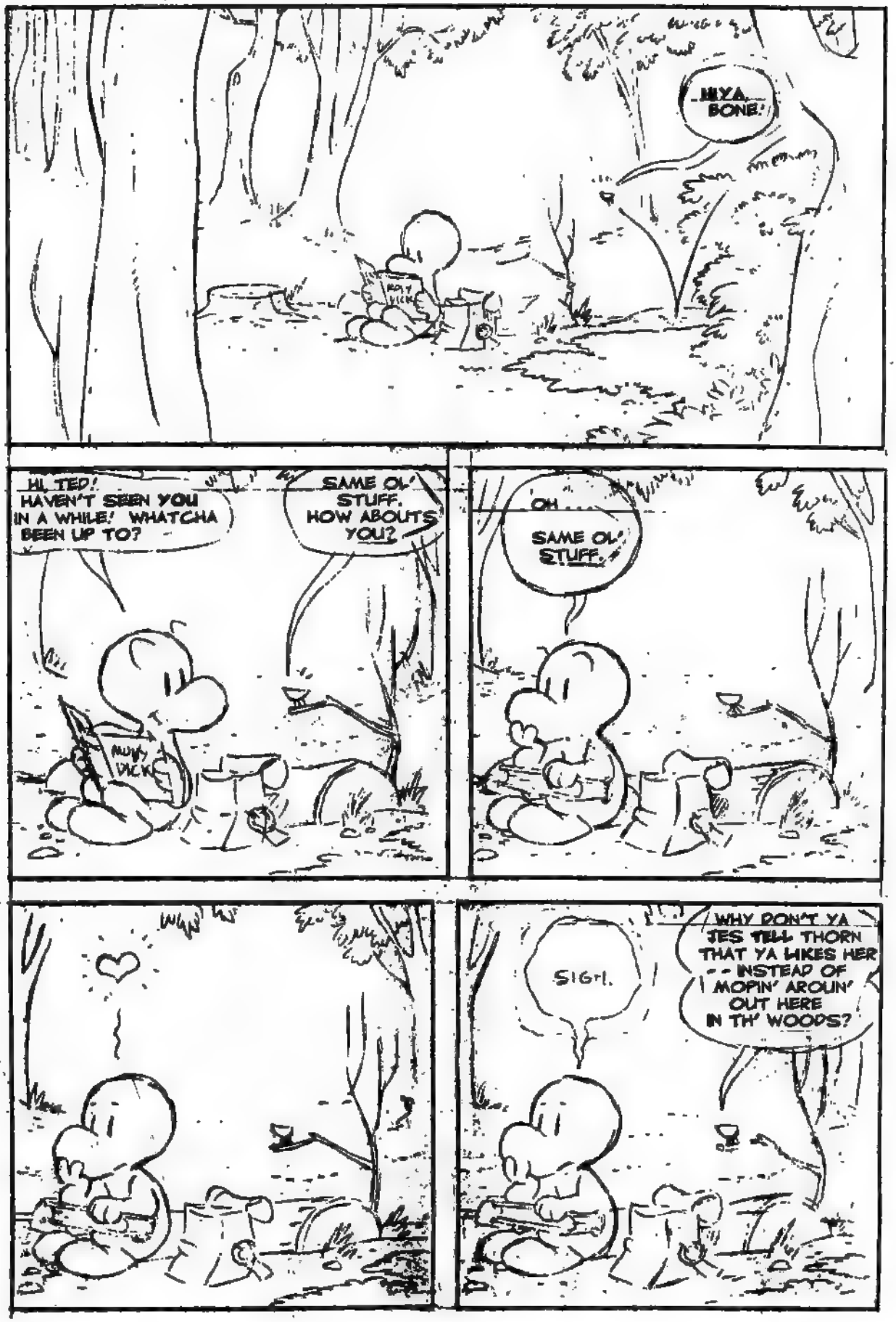
HEY, TRUST ME ON THIS ONE, BONE. A LOVE POEM IS ABOUT TH' ONLY CHANCE YER EVER GONNA GET..

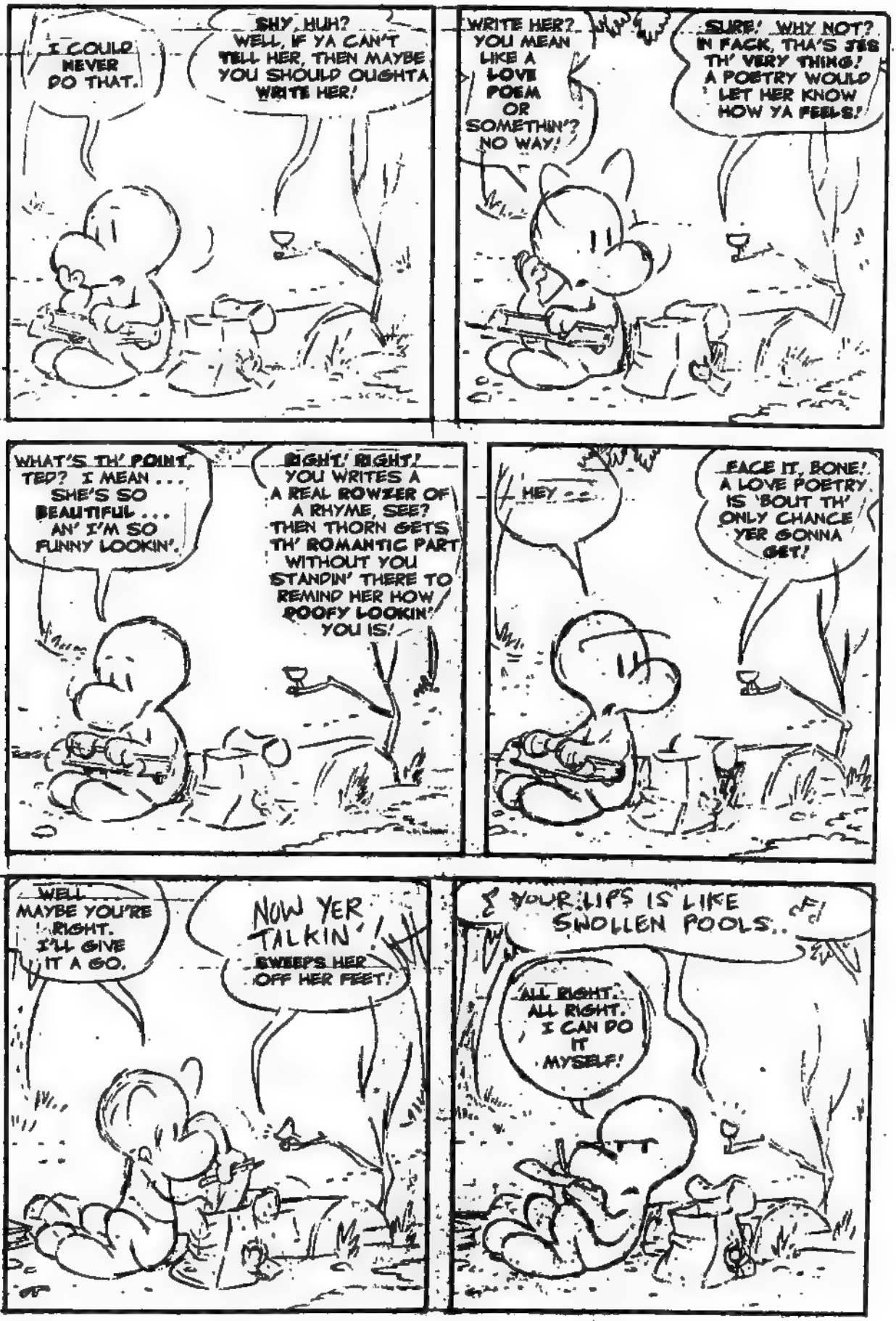
WELL... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL GIVE IT A GO.

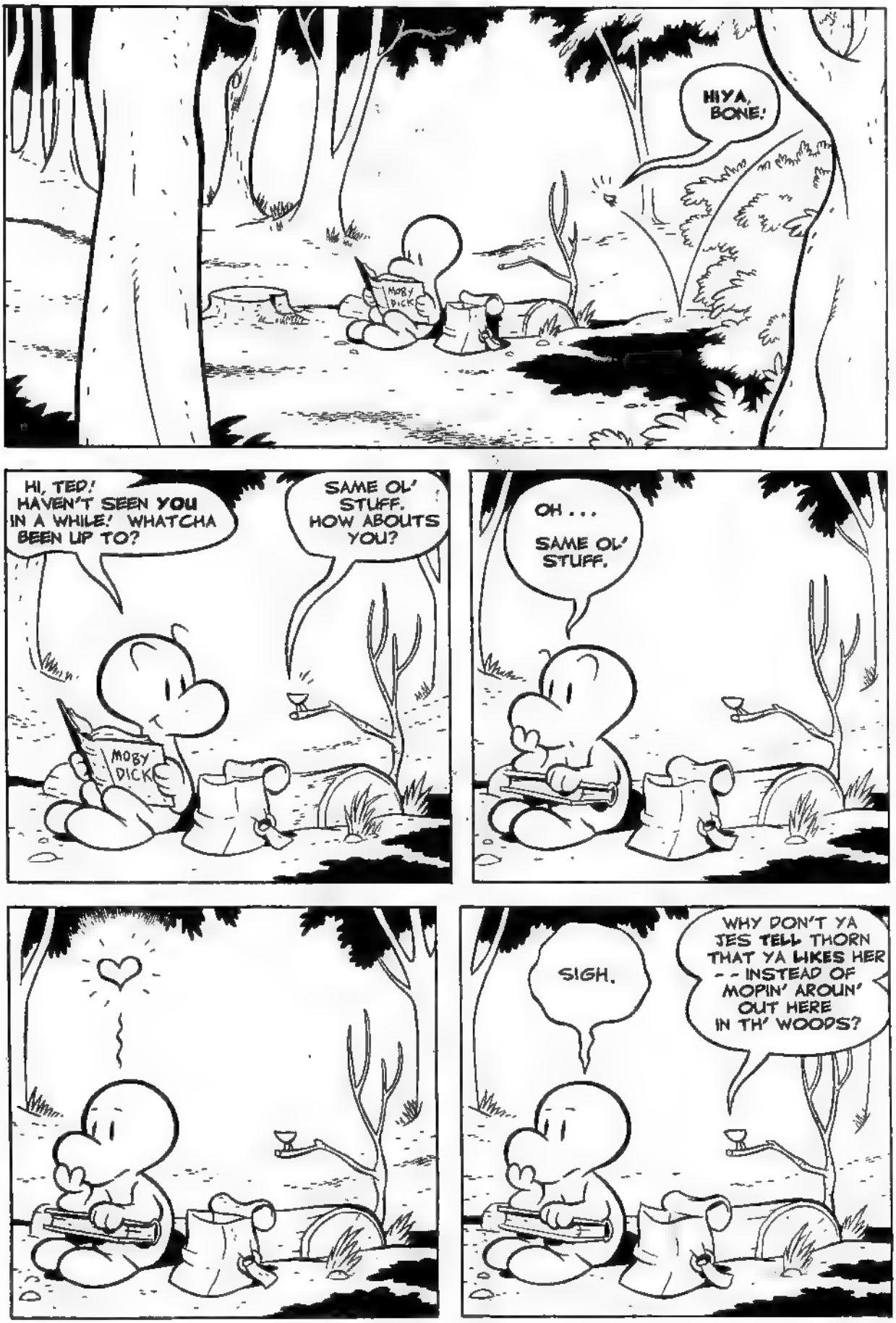
AWRIGHT! GO FOR IT, BONE! SWEEP HER OFF HER FEET!

...YOUR LIPS IS LIKE SWOLLEN POOLS...

ALL RIGHT. ALRIGHT. I CAN DO IT MYSELF!


HIYA, BONE!
MOBY DICK
HI, TED! HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE! WHATCHA BEEN UP TO?
SAME OL' STUFF. HOW ABOUTS YOU?
MOBY DICK
OH
SAME OL' STUFF.
SIGH.
WHY DON'T YA JES TELL THORN THAT YA LIKES HER -- INSTEAD OF MOPIN' AROUN' OUT HERE IN TH' WOODS?


I COULD NEVER DO THAT.
SHY, HUH? WELL, IF YA CAN'T TELL HER, THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD OUGHTA WRITE HER!
WRITE HER? YOU MEAN LIKE A LOVE POEM OR SOMETHIN'? NO WAY!
SURE! WHY NOT? IN FACK, THA'S JES TH' VERY THING! A POETRY WOULD LET HER KNOW HOW YA FEELS!
WHAT'S TH' POINT, TED? I MEAN ... SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL ... AN' I'M SO FUNNY LOOKIN'.
RIGHT! RIGHT! YOU WRITES A A REAL ROWZER OF A RHYME, SEE? THEN THORN GETS TH' ROMANTIC PART WITHOUT YOU STANDIN' THERE TO REMIND HER HOW POOFY LOOKIN' YOU IS!
HEY --
FACE IT, BONE! A LOVE POETRY IS 'BOUT TH' ONLY CHANCE YER GONNA GET!
WELL MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL GIVE IT A GO.
NOW YER TALKIN'! SWEEPS HER OFF HER FEET!
& YOUR LIPS IS LIKE SWOLLEN POOLS..
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I CAN DO IT MYSELF!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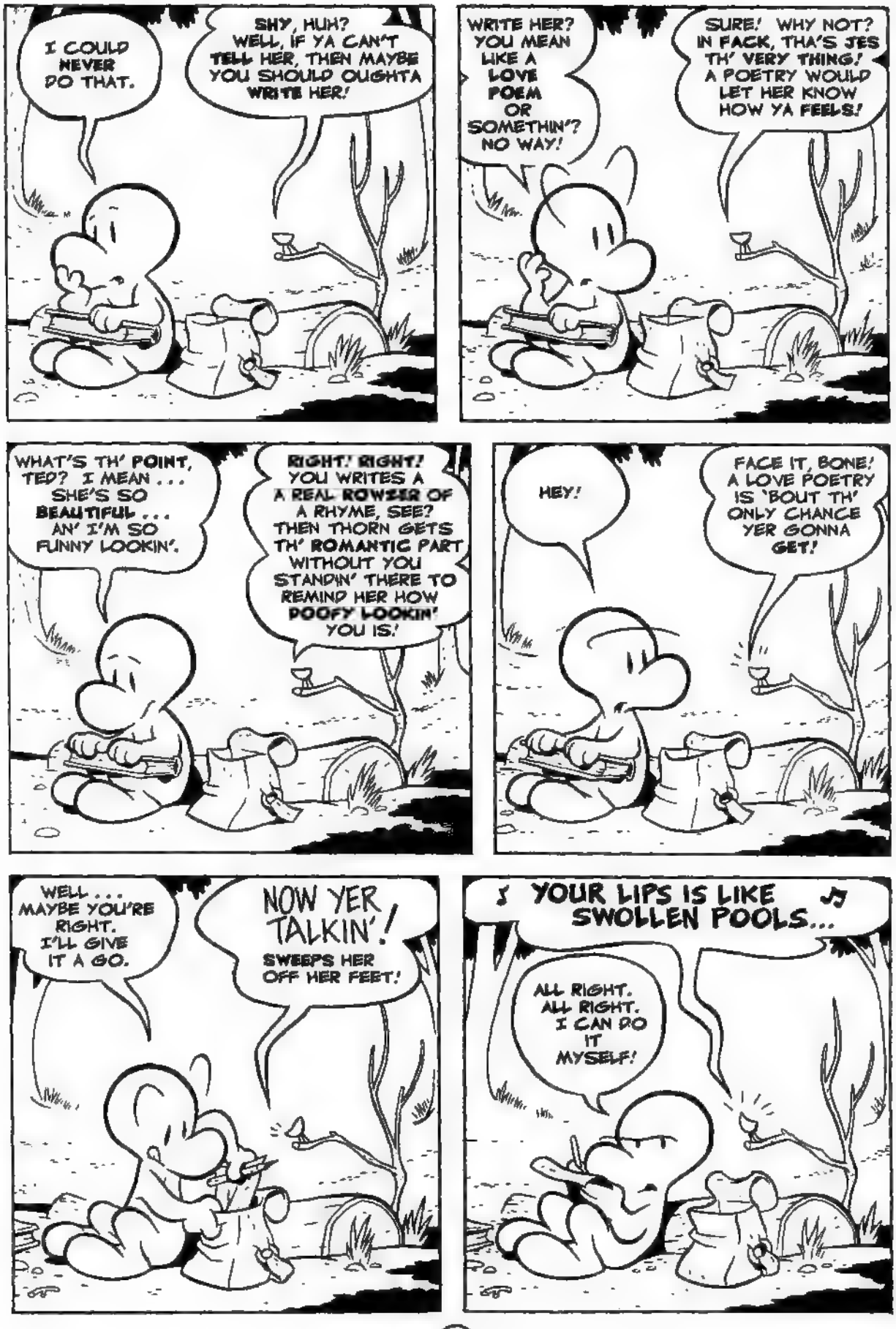
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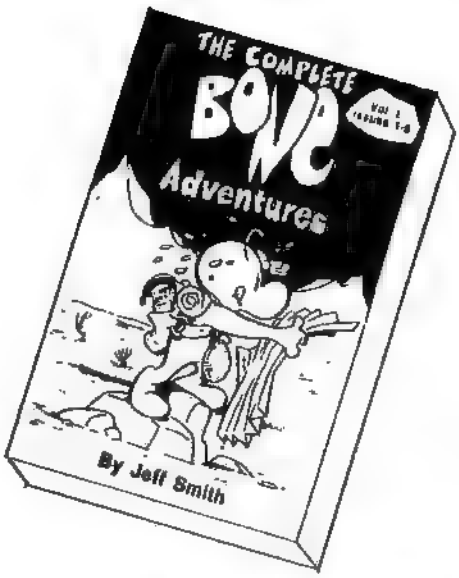
HEY!
FACE IT, BONE! A LOVE POETRY IS 'BOUT TH' ONLY CHANCE YER GONNA GET!
WELL . . . MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL GIVE IT A GO.
NOW YER TALKIN'! SWEEPS HER OFF HER FEET!
♪ YOUR LIPS IS LIKE SWOLLEN POOLS... ♫
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I CAN DO IT MYSELF!

THE FIRST BONE TRADEBOOK!



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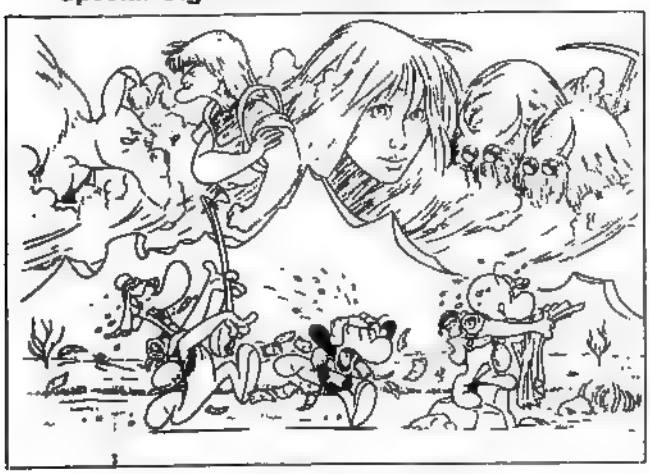

- The Spirit of Adventure -

This large 17" X 11 3/4" limited edition print depicts the BONE cousins at the very begining of their exodus from Boneville while the clouds billowing overhead give us a glimpse of the adventures that lie in store!

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*- Each print will be shipped flat in heavy cardboard with a **Certificate of Authenticity** also signed and numbered by the cartoonist.*

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LAZARETTO VI

2263 09 23 500km near MARS.

ANYTHING NEW, LIEUTENANT?

NO, SIR. WE'RE STILL RECEIVING THE SAME DISTRESS BROADCAST."

L6 TO MARS: RECOVERY MISSION COMPLETE: ORGANIC CARGO INTACT AND OPERATIONAL--

"FORGET IT THEN, BOSTIK. TELL CENTRAL WE'RE GOING IN."

"BUT SIR, WE HAVEN'T SECURED—"

"JUST DO IT, LIEUTENANT!"

"SNAP TO IT, BOYS. LET'S SECURE THIS *FLOATING TURD* BEFORE THE GOOD LIEUTENANT HERE DRIVES MY ASS CRAZY."

UWC HERACL

MARS ORBIT PAT

"HEY, SARGE. MAYBE YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO ANNII. SHE'S SAVED YOUR BUTT MORE THAN A FEW TIMES."

I DON'T RECALL ASKIN' YOU ANYTHING, GALVEZ. I AM ASSESSING THE SITUATION .. AND DEEM IT NON-HOSTILE.

AMAZING! AND YOU DID ALL THAT FROM A SITTING POSITION.

YOU DAMN STRAIGHT! I'VE SEEN SHIPS LIKE THIS ONE BEFORE. IT'S PROBABLY AN AUTOMATED TRANSPORT BEING USED TO SMUGGLE BLACK MARKET CARGO.

I'LL BET MY NEXT CREDIT BLOCK IT'S NOTHING BUT BINS FULL OF BETA-CUPCIN OR VR PORN DISCS --IF WE'RE LUCKY.

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THIS ONE, SARGE. I AIN'T NEVER SEEN A SHIP THAT OLD AND STILL FUNCTIONAL. I DON'T LIKE IT.

YOU'RE NOT PAID TO LIKE IT, NORRIS. BOSTIK, WHAT'S CENTRAL SAY-IN'?

NOTHING, SARGE. PROCEED WITH CAUTION. WE'RE FLOATIN' SOLO.

OH THAT'S SWEET. SENDIN' US IN THERE BLIND, WHO DO THEY--

SHUT IT, FORTSON! BOSTIK, YOU GOT ON INTERIOR SCANS?

VERY LITTLE MOVEMENT-- I DON'T THINK IT'S HUMANOID. COULD BE SERVICE DROIDS-- OR RODENTS MAYBE.

"COULDN'T SAY, BOSTIK--CAN YOU BYPASS THE SECURITY PROGRAMS?"

THIS IS ALL WRONG-- WHY THROW US THIS KIND OF DISTRESS SIGNAL? LISTS CARGO INFO INSTEAD OF EMERGENCY SPECS.

YES, SIR--BUT THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX-TEEN IMPORT REGULATIONS AGAINST THAT--

"I KNOW I KNOW! JUST GET THE DAMN HATCH OPEN!"

YES SIR, BUT I'M GONNA NEED AN ONLINE REMOTE, ASAP

GOT'CHA' ANNII. LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

MY SENTIMENTS EXACTLY, GALVEZ! MOVE!! QUICKLY! QUICKLY!

I'D HANG MY SON'S DOG IF HE'D JUST SHUT UP.

BRRR! COLD ON THIS BIRD, CHIEF!

PORT AHEAD, BOSTIK-- WE'LL PATCH YOU UP IN A SEC.

TELL ME SOMETHIN', BOYS!

WE'RE COMING UP ON THE BRIDGE

WHA ..WHAT WAS THAT? YOU GUYS HEAR--

SHHHHH!

WE GOT SOMETHING.

WE GOT THREE *DEACTIVATED* DROIDS. LOOKS LIKE THEY WENT UP AGAINST EUROPEAN MINE PIRATES.

CHECK FOR IDENTIFICATION MARKS?

HEY! WATCH OUT FOR BOOBIES ON THOSE DAMN THINGS

NO MARKINGS--LOW MAINTENANCE DRODS, LIKE THE SURGICAL DRONES IN THE PASSAGEWAY--WAIT A SEC

THERE IT IS AGAIN. HEAR?

YEAH. I HEARD IT THAT TIME. FORTSON, WE'RE GONNA MOVE UP A LEVEL.

THIS SHIP WAS A PERSONNEL TRANSPORT USED TO SHIP PRISONERS TO 78.13F, THAT USED TO BE AN AREA RESERVED FOR PRISON/SLAVE COLONIES BUT IT HASN'T BEEN OPERATIONAL FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS THERE MUST BE--

GIVE ME SOMETHIN' I CAN USE LIKE WHAT THE HELL IS DOIN IN MY QUAD?

RUN A CHECK ON THIS, BOSTIK. L-A-Z-A-R-E-T-T-O SIX.

WHAT'S TAKIN' SO LONG, BOSTIK!?!

WE'RE UP TO LEVEL NINE NOW, SARGE.

HOLD UP--WE'VE GOT AN ACTIVE DROID. STAND BY

THE SHIP IS GIVING ME CONFLICTING DATA. I'LL SWITCH TO SYNTH/VOICE.

L6--SHOW CARGO LISTING

--PRESENT CARGO: 3,454 FEMALE AND 5,534 MALE ORGANIC UNITS--FOR PRIMARY PROGRAM. SEE REPAIR LIST

"SHOW REPAIR LIST"

CAREFUL, NORRIS.

REPAIRS FROM 2/14/43~ PRESENT. UNIT DW32: RT ARM...UNIT LN215: LT CORNEA...UNIT NP968: MID ART...UNIT 05689: LT FEMUR AND LT FIBULA...

GALVEZ, COME IN. JACOBS, DO YOU COPY? ROSENBAUM?

L6--WHAT RECEIVED REPAIRS?

UNITS OF PRIMARY PROGRAM

CAREFUL.

PRIMARY PROGRAM 1: TO TRANSPORT/ SECURE PERSONNEL DESIGNATED UNDER CRIMINALLY INSANE STATUS. TOTAL-- 13,243 UNITS TO BE MAINTAINED.

L6—EXPLAIN HOW CARGO UNITS ARE MAINTAINED.

JACOBS-- ROSENBAUM! SOMEBODY ANSWER ME DAMMIT! FORT-SON, YOU STILL THERE?

I'M HERE, SARGE.

WHAT WAS THAT?

UNITS MAINTAINED BY ELIMINATING ALL FAULTS.

HOW ARE FAULTS ELIM-INATED?

NNGG!

OH HELL!!

FAULTS ELIMINATED BY REPLACING FAULTY PARTS WITH RETRIEVED EXCESS PARTS.

SARGE! SARGE! WE--SQUAK!!—

DAMN! IF YOU WANT SOMETHIN' DONE RIGHT...

SOMEBODY ANSWER! WE GOTTA GET OUTTA THIS--

L6- HOW ARE EXCESS PARTS RETRIEVED?

IF THIS IS ANOTHER SMART -ASS PRANK, I'M WRITING ALL YOU BASTARDS UP AS SOON AS WE DOCK HOME. YOU HEAR ME?!!

TAP TAP TAP TAP

EXCESS PARTS RETRIEVED ACCORDING TO PRIMARY PROGRAM 2.

LIST PRIMARY PROGRAM 2

GALVEZ? YOU MUST LIKE UNEMPLOYMENT, BOY. DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?!

SERGEANT, NOO!!

WHAT IS IT, LIEUTENANT?--

CAN'T YOU SEE I'VE GOT ENOUGH PROBLEMS!

PRIMARY PROGRAM 2: TO RETRIEVE ALL ORGANIC UNITS RESPONDING TO L6 DISTRESS BEACON AS DIRECTED.

COMPUTER, CLOSE HATCHWAY! CLOSE--
ORGANIC UNITS-- RE89...TY056... HJ4333...
...YT43...BN1123 ...RET5664
BY THE BOOK, LIEUTENANT. FOLLOW THE PROGRAM. FOLLOW THE PROGRAM. THERE ARE AT LEAST SIXTEEN MAJOR REGULATIONS THAT IS ALL WRONG. ALL WRONG.
OH GOD! OH GOD! WHO DIRECTED THIS?!? WHO!?!?
PRIMARY PROGRAMS DIRECTED BY THE FOLLOWING:
DATALOG: 9 23/63--7 ORGANIC UNITS RETRIEVED FROM TRANSPORT HERACLES.
INVALID REQUEST, ORGANIC UNIT. ALL HERACLES COMMANDS ARE SUBVERTED BY L6--AS PRIMARY PROGRAM 2 IS ENGAGED AS DIRECTED.
L6 TO EARTH. L6 TO EARTH. RECOVERY MISSION COMPLETE: ORGANIC CARGO INTACT AND OPERATIONAL.
THE END

THE GREAT
FROG
BALL
DRIVE
THEATER
CLOSED
TONIGHT, ROY, IS A VERY SPECIAL OCCASION
BREAK OUT THE SKUNKY IMPORT BEER--
BECAUSE PENNY'N ME'S GETTIN' MARRIED!

NOW DON'T THINK I'M WEIRDIN' OUT ON THIS
I'VE THOUGHT EVERYTHING THROUGH.
AND ROY.
I'D BE HONORED IF YOU WERE MY BEST MAN.
IF I COULD JUST FIND DISH.
GODDAN
LIGHT
SCHWICH
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK

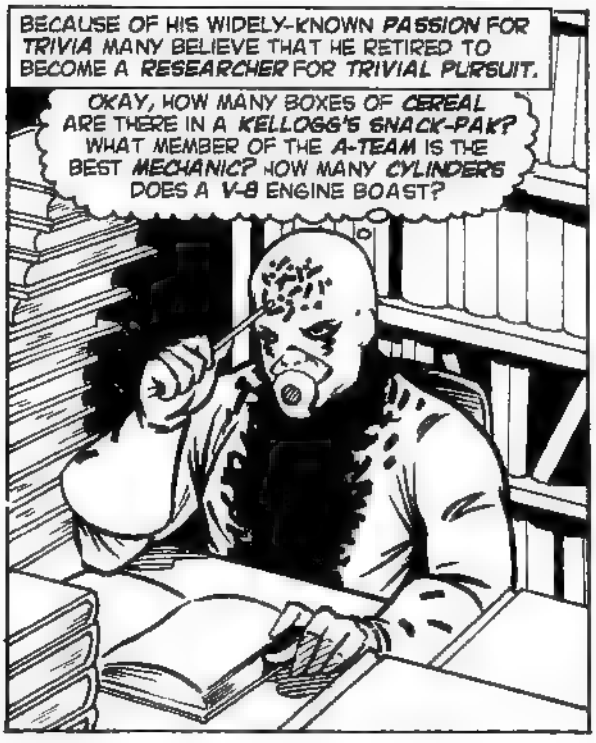
BLINK-BUUZZZZZZ
WELL..
KEEP IN MIND THAT HER DRESS ISN'T DONE YET
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OH DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!
YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO BE MORE ACCEPTING OF PEOPLE
AND STOP JUDGING EVERYONE BY THEIR LOOKS

THE PANIC

STORY: JOE PRUETT
ART: J. ADAM WALTERS
LETTERS: ROXANNE STARR
SOUND FX CONSULTANT:
ALAN MOORE

FIRST APPEARING WITH THE ROUGH-NECK, MILL TOWN, SUPERHERO GROUP... *THE MYSTERYMEN*, IN THE LATE 1970'S, *THE PANIC'S* RISE TO FAME WAS *ASTRONOMICAL*...MATCHED ONLY BY HIS SUDDEN *DISAPPEARANCE* FROM THE PUBLIC'S *WATCHFUL EYE*.

BECAUSE OF HIS WIDELY-KNOWN *PASSION* FOR *TRIVIA* MANY BELIEVE THAT HE RETIRED TO BECOME A *RESEARCHER* FOR *TRIVIAL PURSUIT*.


OKAY, HOW MANY BOXES OF *CEREAL* ARE THERE IN A *KELLOGG'S SNACK-PAK*? WHAT MEMBER OF THE *A-TEAM* IS THE BEST *MECHANIC*? HOW MANY *CYLINDERS* DOES A *V-8* ENGINE BOAST?

OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE PANIC WAS *WOOED* BY THE *FEMININE CHARMS* OF HIS LAST CASE... *THE WITCHES OF SALEM, INDIANA*... AND CHOSE TO *ACCEPT* HIS MANLY *OBLIGATIONS*.

WHATEVER THE REASON, THE PANIC HAS REEMERGED ON THE SCENE FULLY RE-ENERGIZED WITH A VIGOR UNMATCHED BY THE MUSCLE-BOUND, NO-NECK, WUSSES ATTEMPTING TO PASS AS HEROES TODAY.
I TELL YOU DAVE, SOME OF THESE GEEKS OUT THERE TODAY HAVE DRAMATICALLY LOWERED THE OVERALL SUPERHERO I.Q. LEVEL!
IT'S AN EMBARRASSMENT TO US ALL.
USING HIS DARING SHOCK TACTICS, THE PANIC IS ABLE TO CREATE AN INSTANT REIGN OF TERROR IN THE HEARTS AND BOWELS OF HIS ENEMIES.
WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
IT'S THE PANIC... RUN!
GEEZ, I WET MYSELF.
RUTHLESS, UNRELENTING, AND BLOODY...RUE THE MISFORTUNE OF ANYONE WHO CROSSES HIS PATH.
AND THAT'S JUST ON BOWLING NIGHT.
NO CRIME IS TOO SMALL FOR HIS WRATH.
ALRIGHT, KEEP STILL! NOTHING IS MORE SHAMEFUL THAN MIDGET WRESTLERS GONE BAD.
PUT US DOWN, YOU JOLLY GREEN GIANT!
CONSUMED BY THE UNKNOWN, THE PANIC IS ON A NEVER-ENDING QUEST TO SOLVE THE WORLD'S GREAT MYSTERIES.
DAMN THIS STUPID CUBE! IT CAN'T BE DONE!
BELOVED BY DOZENS, THE PANIC IS A TRUE AMERICAN HERO.
WHO IS THAT IDIOT?
END

A POPPY SKETCHBOOK OR THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF OTTERS

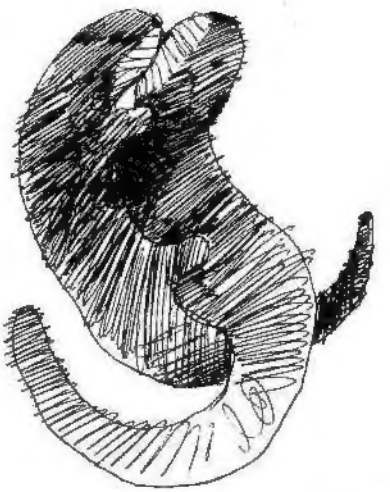
I DIDN'T EVEN *KNOW* THAT JOE KNEW I KEPT A SKETCHBOOK, MUCH LESS THAT HE WOULD WANT TO *PUBLISH* IT. BUT CRAIG, THAT SLOW-POKE ARTIST *MISSED* THE *DEADLINE* FOR THIS ISSUE'S *POPPY* STORY (WHICH FEATURES, OF COURSE, YOURS TRULY). THEN THAT EVER READY EDITOR, *JITTERIN' JOE PRUETT* SUGGESTED RUNNING A 3-PAGE *POPPY SKETCHBOOK* INSTEAD. *BOY*, WAS I *FLATTERED!* (THIS DID SEEM APPROPRIATE SINCE I FIRST SHOWED UP IN *CRAIG'S* SKETCHBOOK BACK AROUND 1988.) CRAIG OFFERED TO PROVIDE SOME *OTHER* DRAWINGS, BUT JOE INSISTED ON A *POPPY* SKETCHBOOK. SO HERE I AM, A *NOT EVEN PROPERLY PREMIERED* COMIC BOOK CHARACTER ON MY WAY TO BECOMING A *PUBLISHED COMIC BOOK CREATOR*--WHAT A TRIP!

WELL...LAST SUMMER, MY TWO *OTTER* PALS, *KLAUS* AND *JEAN-PAUL*, JOINED ME IN A TRIP TO THE SEA, WHERE I DID A LOT OF SKETCHING. ON ONE CLEAR DAY, I FOUND A LOVELY BLUFF FROM WHICH TO SKETCH, AND THAT'S WHERE I DID *THE FOLLOWING PICTURES...*

OTTER

PLAY

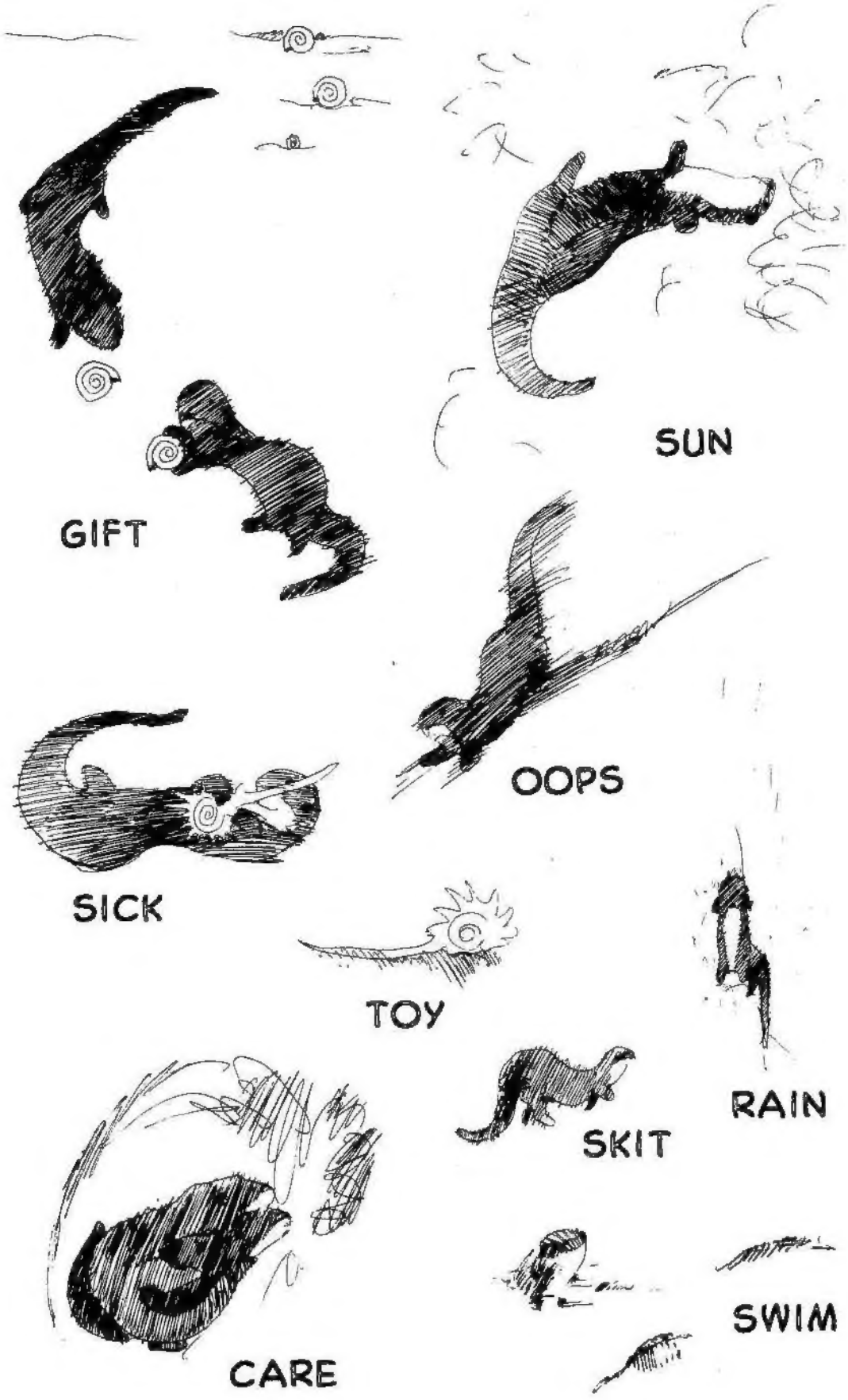
PRAY



LOVE

LOOK

RUN


SUN
GIFT
OOPS
SICK
TOY
RAIN
SKIT
SWIM
CARE

LULLABY

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"The Man Who Never Sleeps Is Fighting Your Worst Nightmares..."

An ongoing series coming soon from Krünchy Frogg Studios.

CHARLES MOORE
◆
CASEY JONES